

Dear SIRN community

This issue provides an update on recent news from UKRI and the wider community, opportunities for early-career researchers and relevant events and tools. SIRN also sends a plea for you to say YES to stay in contact.

Adélia de Paula (on behalf of [SIRN Leadership Team](#))

Say YES to be in contact with SIRN:

As you are probably aware, the new [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) will apply from 25 May 2018, when it supersedes the UK Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). We are taking this opportunity to refresh our contact list sending a request for colleagues to confirm they want to stay in contact with us. Without formal consent, we won't be able to maintain contact. Thank you to all who have already responded positively to our call.

If you are not a member yet, would you like to join our network today? We encourage you to join the network by completing the [online form](#). Registration with SIRN is free and will only take a few minutes. To receive future news follow us on [@SIRN_Tweets](#). If you wish more information, please get in touch info@sirn.org.uk

Current news:

UKRI announced final names for [executive roles](#) with Professor Melanie Welham selected as the Executive Chair of BBSRC and Professor Lynn Gladden selected for the role of Executive Chair of the EPSRC. Dr Ian Campbell was also appointed Innovate UK interim Executive Chair.

Defra Consultation [The future for food, farming and the environment](#) closed on the 8 May 2018. More than 44,000 responses have been received on the government's proposals for the future once we leave the EU. A recent WWF poll, undertaken by Populus, found that [91 per cent of the UK public want to see farmers paid to protect nature](#). Responses to the consultation will now be analysed carefully and the Government will publish a response shortly.

New report published in March by the Lords Selected Committee says ['Rural communities are being failed by Government'](#). The committee argues diminished resources given to departments and bodies to protect the UK's natural environment and promote the needs of rural communities had a profound, negative impact on England's biodiversity, environment and the social and economic welfare of rural areas.

In late April, it was announced that [further restrictions on neonicotinoid pesticides](#) have been approved following a vote in the European Commission. The UK voted in favour of the proposals that will see a ban on outdoor use of three neonicotinoids - Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam and stated, unless the scientific evidence changes, the government will maintain these increased restrictions post-Brexit. However, the UK reserves the right to consider emergency authorisations. They will only do so where there is a real need for the products and the risk to bees and other pollinators is sufficiently low.

[New agritech partnership has been announced by Cambridge](#) and four other universities (East Anglia, Hertfordshire, Lincoln and Reading) including the John Innes Centre, NIAB and Rothamsted Research. The partnership aims to develop and commercialise agritech research, in order to improve sustainability, increase productivity and contribute to global food security.

The Royal Society of Arts - Food, Farming and Countryside Commission evaluated evidence, from 1,000 proposals in 160 reports, speeches, consultation responses and other documents, all published since 2015. Tom MacMillan (Soil Association) explains more in his [blog](#). They now want your view on practical action that could improve the ways we eat, farm, and regenerate our environment and countryside communities. A [short survey](#) is open until 31st May.

Another initiative from 3keel and the University of Oxford [reviewed 116 studies](#) to better understand [what voluntary sustainability standards deliver on the ground](#) and new evidence suggests that [sustainability standards drive action](#). Examples include the certification scheme from [LEAF Marque](#). You can see full report 'The effectiveness of standards in driving adoption of sustainability practices: A State of Knowledge Review' [here](#).

Congratulations to Prof Martin Broadley (University of Nottingham) and Dr Louise Ander (British Geological Survey) for winning the [International Impact Awards at the BBSRC Innovator of the Year](#) celebrations. The prize relates to the GeoNutrition project that takes a geographical approach to nutrition linking large-scale soil, agricultural and landscape datasets with factors affecting the supply of micronutrients to crops and food systems. Read more about the project [here](#).

Prof Rosie Hails (CEH and member of SIRN Advisory Board) and Rob Fish (University of Kent) become lead editors of the new journal People and Nature from The British Ecological Society (BES), in partnership with its publisher John Wiley & Sons. [People and Nature](#) is an open access journal dedicated to publishing high-quality, peer-reviewed work from research areas exploring relationships between humans and nature.

Opportunities for early-career researchers:

Sandpit for early-career researchers at lecturer level and equivalent in any research area covered by BBSRC, NERC and ESRC - [Transforming the food system for health, sustainability and resilience across production and demand](#)

4th-6th July and 19th-20th July 2018 – This activity is part of Global Food Security - Resilience of the UK food system in a global context third call. Expressions of interest are called to address the following question: How can we transform our food system so it is based on healthy and sustainable diets and how would this impact on sustainability and resilient food production and supply? The sandpit will develop outline proposals, a number of which will be invited back to be developed in full proposals. Successful proposals will be jointly funded by BBSRC, ESRC, NERC and the Scottish Government and up to £1.8 million (80% FEC) is available. Application deadline: 23rd May 2018, 16:00

UKRI New Fellowship scheme - [Future Leaders Fellowships](#) scheme providing up to seven years of funding, for at least 550 early-career researchers and innovators, the scheme will tackle difficult and novel challenges.

There will be six calls for the FLFS, with two calls taking place each year over the next 3 years. Applications can be submitted in any area of research or innovation covered by Research Councils and Innovate UK.

Deadline for first call: 03rd July 2018, with a mandatory Expression of Interest required by 7th June.

NERC Innovation Placements - NERC invites applications from existing researchers (at post-doctoral level or above) for [Innovation Placements](#) - 3 to 12 month placements based in non-academic organisations. Projects must fall within the [NERC remit](#) and must identify clear examples of where environmental research, data and skills can be used to make a difference.

Application deadline: 4th July 2018, 16:00

News from Agri-Tech Centres:

The UK's four Agri-Tech Centres have come together as one voice to showcase their commitment to positioning the UK sector as a global leader in sustainable food production. Each Centre has its own unique focus and purpose but a shared vision. Discover more about its aims and impacts of the Agri-Tech Centres at www.agritechcentres.com.

[Agrimetrics](#) has launched a [new Developer Portal](#) which will allow programmers access to national agri-food data. The Portal provides tools to allow programmers to easily incorporate a wealth of relevant, pre-processed, industry data into their own systems and devices, adding value to the services they offer. Please contact them at info@agrimetrics.co.uk to find out more about how you can interact with the Developer Portal.

Cranfield University and Johnson Matthey partnership looks to nurture fresh growth in agritech with [Agri-EPI Centre](#) technologies and pilot programmes involves projects on natural nitrogen-fixing technology, chemical-free pest management solutions and organic soil enhancement products, which aims to improve water use efficiency. Read more [here](#).

[CHAP](#) is producing a series of films about all their capabilities, to show farmers, growers, agronomists, breeders and anyone else with an interest in agri-tech what their facilities can offer. The first two films highlight the CHAP [soil health facilities](#) at Cranfield University and CHAP's [Fine Phenotyping and Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory](#) at Rothamsted Research.

[The Centre for Plasma in Agri-Food \(AgriPlas\)](#) initiative is being funded through [CIEL](#) with £350,000 investment from Innovate UK and a co-investment by Queen's University Belfast dedicated research facility to investigate a new and cutting-edge technology with huge and exciting potential to reduce harmful chemicals and antibiotics in the food chain.

Events:

2nd TERENO International Conference

8th to 12th October 2018 - Berlin, Germany. The Terrestrial Environmental Observatories (TERENO) conference will address topics such as relevance of soils in terrestrial matter fluxes, improving water quality management, remote sensing and ecosystem services and Networking of long-term infrastructures for terrestrial research.

[Call for abstract](#): deadline 31st May 2018

3rd International Agriculture and Food in an Urbanizing Society Conference

17th to 21st September 2018 - Porto Alegre, Brazil. The event organized in partnership with FAO will feature an intense 5-day-long schedule, which includes international panels, symposia, the presentation of scientific papers in thematic working groups, experience reports, field trips and cultural activities. The central theme of the Conference is "Healthy food, socio-biodiversity and sustainable agri-food systems: innovations from consumption to production".

[Call for abstract](#): deadline 8th June 2018

Soils and Sustainable Development Goals - 2018 British Society of Soil Science Conference

4th-5th September 2018, Lancaster University. The conference theme is Soils and Sustainable Development Goals where the role of soil science in achieving these goals will be explored.

[Call for abstract](#): deadline midnight 10th June 2018

N8 AgriFood International Conference - People, Health & Food Systems, Challenges & Solutions for 2030

13th-14th June 2018, Liverpool. This year, themes for sessions include: Post-Brexit food systems and the environment; Promoting sustainable consumer choices; Innovations in urban and indoor farming for sustainable supply chains; Latest technologies in food manufacturing and processing; Food waste: moving to sustainable bio economies. Read more [here](#).

1st International Conference on Urban Agriculture and City Sustainability

9th to 11th October, 2018 - New Forest, UK. The aim of the Conference is to review and discuss ways in which urban agriculture can contribute to achieving sustainable cities. If delegates wish to present a paper at the conference, they should submit a 200-300 word abstract via their website. There is no specific abstract deadline as such, however they recommend that you submit your contributions as soon as possible. The paper deadline for this conference is currently 5th July 2018 and abstracts will need to be reviewed before submission of the final paper. Read more [here](#).

IFSTAL - Innovative Food Systems Teaching and Learning - Food for thought event

12th July 2018, Oxford. [IFSTAL](#) will be holding this event to showcase, share and discuss experiences of a multi-institution collaboration for interdisciplinary teaching and learning with a focus on the food system. This event is open to the wider community. Read more [here](#).

'Multi-Soil' Multimodal Image Based Modelling Workshop

25th - 26th September 2018, University of Southampton. The purpose of this interdisciplinary workshop will be to bring together key researchers working in different areas of soil structural imaging, chemical imaging and mathematics with the aim of developing a unified approach to study water and solute movement in soils. This will provide a platform for experimentalists and modellers to discuss the vital issues and possible solutions relevant to scalability of results and methodologies in soil.

[Call for abstract](#): deadline 25th August 2018

Food Brexit

1st November 2018, London. Food Brexit 2018, organised by [New Food Magazine](#), will be held on 1 Nov 2018. The Food Brexit conference will bring together manufacturers, suppliers and retailers from the European Food

and Beverage industry to participate, share concerns, and find solutions to plan for the future of their business in the post Brexit era. Read more [here](#).

Webinar:

UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee Webinar- Reframing Resilience for Natural Capital
The webinar (held on 14th May) explored the relationship of resilience and natural capital as emerging concepts in the current dynamic area of conservation and environmental management. Speakers are Paul Woodcock (Join Nature Conservation Committee), Jane Lusardi (Natural England) and Tom Oliver (University of Reading). Recordings are now [available on YouTube](#).

Tools and resources:

The [ENDURE network](#) compiled a [list of more than 50 European projects](#) relating to sustainable agriculture in one table (with links). Most not 'ENDURE-endorsed', but an aid to help international Integrated Pest Management (IPM) community get an insight into European agricultural research. Projects include IPM, integrated agro-ecosystem approach, rotation, inter-cropping and more.

The [Ecosystem Knowledge Network](#) has a [comprehensive list of tools](#) on different aspects of ecosystem services, natural capital, land use, catchment and more.

The first official account of the electronic Rothamsted Archive and what it offers, published today, highlights how this unique historical repository of agricultural and meteorological data, which stretch back to 1843, is the result of some remarkable forward thinking. Read more in Perryman et al, 2018, Scientific Data: The electronic Rothamsted Archive (e-RA), an online resource for data from the Rothamsted long-term experiments. doi:[10.1038/sdata.2018.72](https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2018.72)

Highlighted publication:

Lukas Egli et al, Winners and losers of national and global efforts to reconcile agricultural intensification and biodiversity conservation, Global Change Biology (2018). doi: [10.1111/gcb.14076](https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.14076)

[A Pre-Competitive Vision for the UK's Plant and Crop Sector](#) is a paper from Innovate UK and KRN that defines clear priorities for the UK's [Plant and Crop sector](#) indicating areas of research and implementation necessary to achieve the full potential of its excellent research, production and industrial capability.

[The Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](#) report on '[The Sustainable Development Goals and their trade-offs](#)' - A case study about the trade-offs between the Sustainable Development Goals, through the lens of an imaginary country: Progressia. This may not be a place on the map, but the facts on which it is based, and the dilemmas it faces, are real.



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